.hack//G.U.
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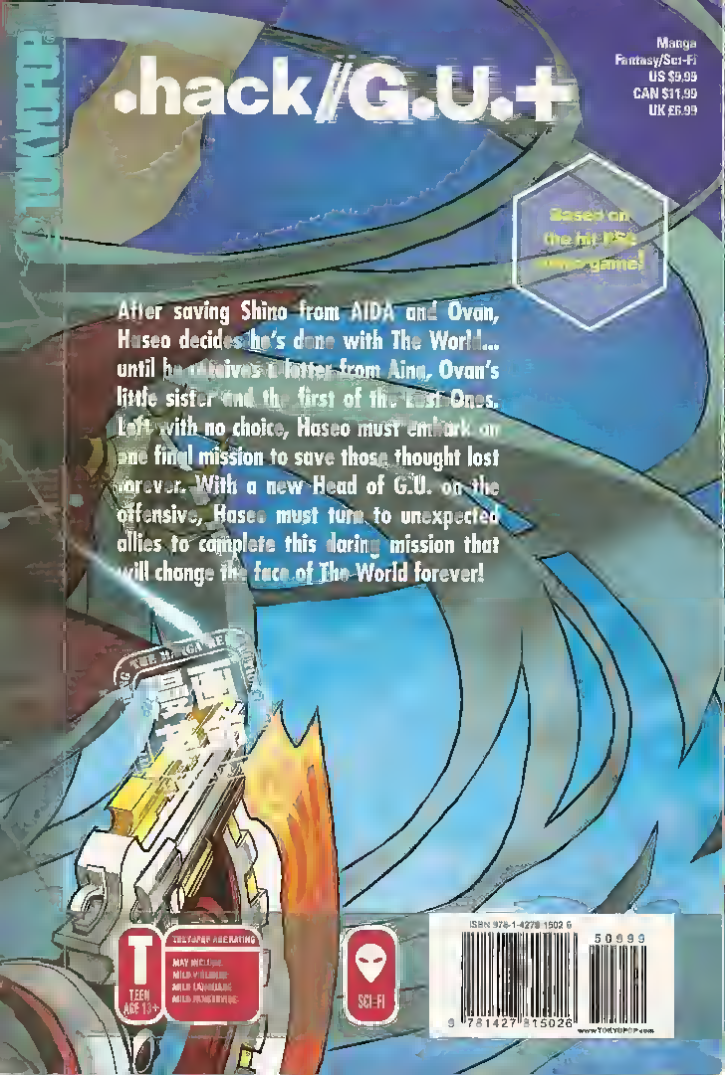
TOKYOPOP

.hack//G.U.+

Manga
Fantasy/Sci-Fi
US $9.99
CAN $11.99
UK £6.99

Based on the hit PS2 videogame!

After saving Shino from AIDA and Ovan, Haseo decides he's done with The World... until he receives a letter from Aina, Ovan's little sister and the first of the Lost Ones. Left with no choice, Haseo must embark on one final mission to save those thought lost forever. With a new Head of G.U. on the offensive, Haseo must turn to unexpected allies to complete this daring mission that will change the face of The World forever!



ISBN 978-1-4278-1502-6
50999
9 781427 815026
www.TOKYOPOP.com

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TEEN
AGE 13+

SCI-FI

.hack//G.U.+

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STORY SO FAR

In tha year 2017, the messively multiplayer online geme The World has become its most dangerous, with players killing other players. Heseo's friend Shino falls victim to one of these player killers and consequently falls into a come. In order to save Shino, Heseo ettempts to confront the legendary player killer Tri-Edge, Azure Flame Kite, only to be knocked unconscious by a Data Drain end rescued by two of the game's system edministretors, Pi end Yeta. Haseo is asked to join their organization, G.U., in order to hunt down AIDA.

When Heseo fails at defeating the AIDA-infected player Bordceux, he is rescued by e member of G.U. named Kuhn, who reveals himself to be en Epitaph User with the power to summon an Avatar named Megus. Heseo leerns thet he too may possess such ebilities. Then, when Haseo battles the AIDA-infected player Endrance, Haseo's mortel denger allows him to call upon the power he so desperetely craves. It comes in the form of the Avater called Skeith, the Terror of Death!

Haseo wins the battle—but it's enother player who kills Endrence to acquire his Epitaph, or Morganna Fector. Haseo confronts Azure Flame Kite, who he thinks killed Endrence, and defeats him. But afterward, Kuhn, Yata and Pi are all killed by the Tri-Edge's signature method! It's then thet Heseso discovers the Tri-Edge he'd been seerching for wes Ovan, who had been working symbiotically with the AIDA to save his sister, Aina. Haseo's Terror of Death is the Key of Twilight Ovan has been searching for, and the Rebirth progrem is triggered. This leads to the Third Network Crisis end the destruction of Oven, but elso to the return of the Lost Ones—including Shino and Aina.

a c k / / G . U .

Aina

The first person to be infected by an AIDA. When Ovan activated his Rebirth power, she regained consciousness.

Ovan

For the sake of his younger sister, he invoked Rebirth. After that he disappeared. The AIDA Tri-Edge was lodged in his left arm.

Zelkova

Guildmaster of Moon Tree. The first impression he gives off is youth, but he has put together enormous guild that works tower the maintenance of public order.

Kazumi

Employed by CC Corp.'s Safety Division 2. His stated goal is network stabilization, but...

Shino

Harvest Cleric of the Twilight Brigade. She sacrificed her bo for Ovan and lost consciousnes

CHARACTER GUIDE

Kuhn

Former guildmaster of Canard. He was a member of Project G.U., but rebelled against Yata and left

Atoli

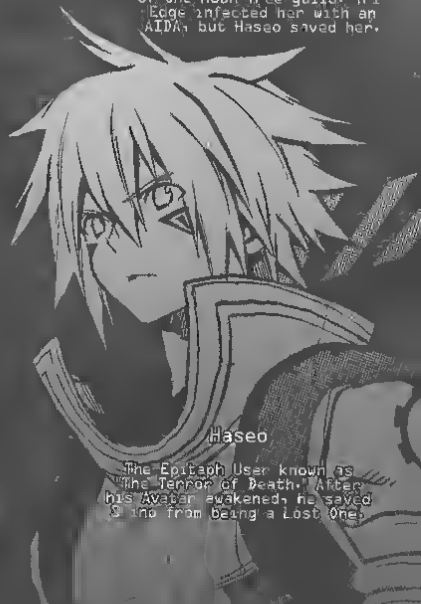
A Harvest Cleric and member of the Moon Tree guild. Tri-Edge infected her with an AIDA, but Haseo saved her.

Pi

A sharp and skilled Tribal Grappler. An active member of Project G.U.; Yata's subordinate.

Yata

ad of Project G.U. At the Serpent res he handled the investigation into the cause of the AIDA.



Haseo

The Epitaph User known as "The Terror of Death." After his Avatar awakened, he saved S ino from being a Lost One.

Steam...
...and magic...
...a world of power!
...and adventurers...
...aspiring for...
2017
MMORPG
The World R:2
Back Online!
CyberConnect

Chapter 13: Letter From The Dead

This is my power as Haseo.
With the power of my Avatar...
...I was able to save Shino, who fell unconscious playing an online game.
I saved her...
...from Ovan and the AIDA!

It's better if we don't meet for a while.
Shino...
Why?
Haseo--
Ryou Misaki-kun.
Because your journey has just begun.

Sh--
Shino...
!
Don't go...
Shinooo!!
Don't go...!

Sigh...
in
I'm bored.
Ryou Misaki
high school junior
Chigusa Kusaka
high school
freshman
How about a movie?

I set aside my Sunday...
...to come all the way into Tokyo from Chiba...
So? There's nothin' to do in Chiba anyway.
Oh, I died.
boom
How about the arcade?
We could play a music game together...
Hmph.
beep beep
Not a chance.
You waste so much money on that crap.
flip
There are some cute things I want to check out.
We could go shopping at Parco.
There's just a bunch of lame ones.

Don't mess with Chiba!!
If all you had in mind was eating at some diner, we could've done that anywhere!
clicker
clicker
カスッ…
……
Waaah…
I knew it. You just see me as a Shino stand-in.
About that...
You've been toying with my feelings all along
Waaah...
...but the real Atoli is nothing like the real Shino.
You may have the same character model in The World...

Hey! You're the one who's always bringing up Shino!
I didn't get dumped!
We're just...
...we're taking a break for a while.
After Shino dumped you, you got lonely, so you started making moves on me instead.
Yup.
That's what you say when you get dumped.
Or something like, "The next time we meet, we'll be better people."
shock
But it...
It's strange to be so... so cool about it.
It's normal to be more stressed out about it.

Being with the one you like.

Oh!
This is so cute!
Huh?
.....
Wow!
What a piece of crap.

...it's a little scary.
Ryou-san...
What is?
Oh, I don't know.
Back then, Haseo-san saved me...
I guess I'm thinking about the gap between Ryou-san and Haseo-san.
And my character, Atoli, robbed of her consciousness, became a monster
...when I was infected by an AIDA virus in The World.

I won't tell you to keep trying.
I could relate to what you said to me back then.
Haseo-san saved me--you saved me, Ryou-san.
But I...
I have no idea what you're thinking now, Ryou-san.

Could it be that...your personality and your character's are blurring?
Put your hand on your heart and see for yourself!
We're not game characters!
.....
The online Atoli and the real-world Chigusa are different.

And things are different now from back then.
Real people have more to live for than just one feeling!
.....
Umm... Aren't you ever going to come back to The World?
I've got no reason to go back.
Ah...
Ryou-san!

I was obsessed with The World.
With saving Shino...
One of the Lost Ones.
That's all.

Root Town
Mac Anu
I see...
Haseo's not coming back, huh?
The World
R:2

I'm bad at convincing people.
I'm sorry, Kuhn-san.
Atoli
Class: Harvest Cleric
*Chigusa Kusaka's character
It's not your fault, Atoli-chan.
Kuhn
Class: Steam Gunner
But...
If Haseo-san's...
...stuck on Shino-san...
I'll give up.
A woman in love, her heart aflutter!
Aaah, how bittersweet!
blush
!

hehh hehh
Shino-san's your competition, hmm? Tricky.
I hate fighting. I...
To fight someone is to take something away from him.
Something like that...
I just can't do.
I see...
But you know what?
If fighting is too hard...
...is it all right just to give up?

Eliminating the AIDA by activating the Rebirth program.
Reviving his unconscious sister.
Have the goals that Ovan risked his life for been accomplished?
Yata
Class: Macabre Dancer
Head of G.U.
CyberConnect Corporation
Project G.U. Headquarters
Integrated Surveillance System
Serpent of Lore

...what could senior management be plotting?
There have been no new instances of coma victims or Lost Ones.
Pi
Class: Tribal Grappler
CC Corp. SysAdmin
The reopening of The World is running smoothly.
However, in the aftermath of Rebirth, the stock market suddenly dropped over 40% because of the Third Network Crisis.
Now...
CC Corp's stock price has been halved.

.....
"Being with the one you like..." hmm?
...that's right.
The only person she couldn't keep her cool in front of was Ovan.
I wasn't the one she trusted— it was Ovan.
Shino was willing to die for Ovan's wish—even in reality.
...didn't want me to save her.
She

If that's how it is...
...then there's nothing I can do about it!
Ping!
E-mail
From: Aina
Aina?!
Ivan's little sister?!

Kuhn...
Come back to G.U.
...heh.
Why would a poor part-timer like me return to the almighty CC Corp.?
I lost Tarvos, too.
Since I lost Magus, I'm just a normal player.

△ Hidden Forbidden Holy Ground
Mülla Granz Cathedral
Shunning the field broken by Wave, The shadowed girl whispers,
Chapter 14: Security Section 2
Alas, the truth unbeknownst,
"Surely, I will return"

SHE'S DEAD...
Awaiting her at journey's end...

Haseo-san!
Aina.

...so, you're living in Germany?
Hmm...
Aina was the first of the Lost Ones to be infected by an AIDA.
Ovan started his killing spree to save her.
Yes.
A lot has happened...
I see...
Our parents died while we were young and my brother took over raising me.

The World was some where I could meet my brother.
It became a special place to me.
So...
Is it true?
You got a letter from Oven, even though he's supposed to be dead?
nod
ごくり

The 2nd Phase Innis, "The Mirage of Deceit" PC: Shino
The 5th Phase Gorre, "The Machinator" PC: Sakubo
The eight Phase Epitaphs
The Fragments of power bestowed upon us by Aura--the ultimate AI
The 3rd Phase Magus, "The Propagation" PC: Kuhn
In other words, the eight Morganna Factors
The 6th Phase Macha, "The Temptress" PC: Endrance
The 4th Phase Fidchell, "The Prophet" PC: Yata
The 7th Phase Tarvos, "The Avenger" PC: Pi
The Epitaph PCs who possess these Factors have their Avatars awakened as the embodiment of their spirits

The 8th Phase
Corbenik: "The Rebirth"
PC: Ovan
However, since Rebirth was activated, the seven Factors have once again been scattered to the seas of the 'net.
The only known Epitaph User remaining is Skeith's.
The 1st Phase
Skeith: "The Terror of Death"
PC: Haseo
Only Haseo--only Ryou Misaki remains.

With over 12 million users in The World, the benefit will be on a national scale.
As long as Haseo is at conflict with The World, CC Corp...
...can't neglect him!
.....!
Kazumi.

Long time no see
CC Corp. Security Administrator, Safety Division 2 Kazumi
Ahem.
The World, founded by its creator, Harald Hoerwick, was made as an autonomous MMORPG managed by Aura--the Ultimate AI.
Oh dear, why the cold reception?
What business does a Security Administrator have with us?
However Aura has been lost!
The resulting catastrophe could be even worse than the AIDA phenomenon!
Without her, we are vulnerable to unknown viruses.
Exactly!
...is not something that you just remove; it's something that you control.
Danger.

Aren't you rather tired of suffering because of the genius Harald's ghost?
Surround!
!
Senior management has decreed!
Yata!
Your employment contract has been canceled, and you are hereby dismissed from Project G.U.
What the--?!

Good work, Pi-- or shall I call you Saeki-kun?
.....
Heh.
Could you please return to Safety Division 2?
.....!
Heh heh.

he text was
ll messed
up, so I
couldn't
read it...
Ovan--
your older
brother--
he should be
dead...right?
Yes. They
even held
a funeral
for him.
I was
t of the
ountry,
ugh, in a
pital, so
couldn't
go.
But
common
sense
dictates...
that I can't
ny this pain.
can't deny
lno's reality.
This
doesn't
make
sense
Getting a
letter from
beyond the
grave .

In The World, the heart's desire takes form
.....
Has his tale not yet come to an end?!
If he's still alive...
No, if I could even just talk to him...
...it doesn't matter what form he takes...

...I want to see my brother!
My brother committed unforgivable crimes in order to save me!
.....!
If anyone can still love him, I can!
I want to see--
And I want him to see...
..Shino.

clap clap clap
?!
How thrilling!
If I don't do this, both Shino and I...
We can't move on from here!
The brave man who saved The World has returned!
A pleasure to meet you I am Kazumi of CC Corp
One of Yata's stooges?
Haseo! You are the sole remaining Epitaph PC!
Naturally, I would like to utilize that power for The World!

You bastard! You aren't from G.U., are you?
Ha! CC Corp wouldn't even publicly admit anything about the Lost Ones! There's no way I would trust your shady corporation
!
I am G.U.
Or rather...
flash
?!
...I am the original Project G.U.

Gas-
AAAAAH!
Hasaa-san!
Ungh
...but it works!
It's still in the experimental stages.
O-data Drain?!

My power will prevail!
The genius Harald's Epitaph users are no match!
Y-you!
Who d'you think you are?!
Ahem!
I will reclaim your Epitaph, the Factor they call Skeith
……!
It is my company's property.
Those bastards.
……!
Is he planning to make me into a Lost One?!
Skeith!

Skeith!
What's happening?!
Looks like it won't come out, huh?
Your Avatar...
Why?!
Why
The power belongs to me!

I reclaim it!!

AAAAAH!
vvvvvv
He got away?
.....

Aaa
Step
.....
Where did he...?

Oh well.
I've recovered the Skeith Factor.
Ryou Misaki may still be assigned as the chosen Epitaph User "The Terror of Death"...
but without access to his Factor, he's just a normal player now.

!
Can she sense my presence when I'm in invisible mode?
What's wrong, Atoli-chan?
?
Can't you hear something?
A ringing sound...

Chapter 15: Xth Form

From the time that I was born into The World...
...you and I have been one.
You are me.
Who's the

Come now!
Come!
Haseo!
Here I am!

Skeith!
Where am I...?
.....
What's up with my Player Character?!
Haseo-san!
!

grin
What's with these weapons?!
Guns?!

It's a new Job Extend! ♪
It's called the Xth Form.
Xth Form?!
We applied a cheat! ♪
That's right!

I hope you like it! ♪
A cheat?!
That's right!
Right this way! ♪
.....
What the heck happened?
10
Flash

!
Where-!?
Zelkova-sama called us here.
Why...?
Atoli! And Kuhn...

This is my guildmaster, Zelkova-sama.
Zelkova-sama?
Setting
ternity's
ght Moon
on Tree
ld @Home
Moon Tree's @Home?
Grin
But you're the leader of a cult bent on netiquette enlightenment.
Why uld you
Haseo-san!
(Sweat)
Speaking of that... what's up with your PC?

Do you remember what happened to you?
Yeah.
That Kazumi guy from CC Corp...
Your Morganna Factor was taken from you.
!
The Skeith Factor...

What are you?
...so I performed a forced transfer and restored your PC. ♪
Because of Kazumi's Data Drain, you were at risk of falling unconscious ...
No.
Is Kazumi an Epitaph User?

These toys were too much for our boy Yata to handle!
Tsk...
The Serpent of Lore...
Shit!
What've you done with him?
He's in good hands.
In any case, he's still the primary stock-holder.
Gritter (smile)
Our goal is...
This task force's purpose is no longer just to manage the operation of Epitaph Users as it was under Yata.
Project G.U. has been handed over to our own Safety Division 2!
With the AIDA threat taken care of, the special task force has been dismissed.
Why would I manage me?

A Dummy Morgenna Factor?!
That's Kazumi's power.
Safety Division 2 are internal auditors, something like CC Corp's very own FBI
The research materials may have been lost in the fire, but they're all here inside my head.
It seems that he's been replaced.
So what happened to Yata?
The goal of Safety Division 2 is the revival of Aura--the Ultimate AI. ♪
...the Epitaph PC known as The Rebirth, Ovan.
That and...

They'll ...erase Ovan?
As the primary cause of the Network Crisis, his existence holds the greatest risk to CC Corp
If Ovan still exists in any form whatsoever...
Not only his body. His PC too.
Even his mind.
He knows too much.
Ovan is a terrorist.
Ovan!
.....?!

You might say that the Lost Ones all eventually recovered, but the Network Crisis caused misfortune for many others.
The world stock market was halved in one instant.
If you're talking strictly about assets, that's as bad as the damage done by two world wars.
there are people who lost all their assets and committed suicide
And a large number of people were killed in traffic accidents or died because of malfunctioning medical equipment
If these facts come out, Ovan--the man by the name of Masato Indou--would most likely be hated by all mankind as one of the greatest villains in history.
Is Ovan meone worth saving?
Even with all that, can you still love him?

I know the truth about Ovan. How can I just abandon him?
I just gotta give him one good punch... Someone's gotta!

I love him.
I'll bear the responsibility for all of my brother's crimes.
In his place, I will take his punishment.
Aina!
Ovan sacrificed his life to save you.
No I will protect you!

It's not like we weren't already involved anyway.
Haseo-san!
I'll help, too!
You guys...
But we don't have any power anymore. We're just regular players now.
Haseo-san...
Your Avatar...
You mean the power linking mind and PC?
That's right. Your thoughts are your blades.
You can't use your Avatar because your will has been clouded.

I...I can't give up yet!
It's one of the mysteries of The World.
The feel of autonomy.
So what do you say? Let's take back what was lost to us!
This should be our connection to Ovan, who is currently separated from existence.
This is what the Xth Form is for.

They say there used to be a statue of a girl here.
A girl?
There exist parts of the game that aren't run by any of CC Corp's protocols, but by the rules of the game itself.
The Key of the Twilight It is not the creation of a Game Master, but an item produced by The World.
There's no way!
This game has a peculiar sort of autonomy.
Hmm ... maybe she got bored ...
...with this world.
So, what happened to it?
It seems that was her name
Aura.

...under which our Twilight Brigade plays the game.
It exists.
Or at least that is the assumption..
Chapter 15: R.A. Plan
Autonomy...
It's a search for the omnipotent Aura.
The Eight These Epitaphs show the way.
When we were in the Twilight Brigade, Ovan knew that Aura—the Ultimate AI—existed.
The search for the Key of the Twilight is an allegory of sorts.

To roll back the stone from the goddess' prison.
Ovan chose to reformat The World using the Rebirth program.
You were the key, Haseo.
If all he wanted was to save me...
...It would have been enough just to eliminate the AIDA.
What a lonely love.
What strength...
He knew that the Network Crisis would happen as a result of all this.

Now, Kazumi is attempting to revive Aura through the Eight Phase Epitaphs.
So as not to cause a Network Crisis again.
What?!
So ...
That means he's trying to do something bad?
Indeed it does, Natoli. ♪

To accomplish his goals, he'll risk human lives?!
There's no honor in that!
I can't accept that.
That's CC Corp. business as usual, isn't it?
What reason do you have for stopping Kazuma!?

I can't just forget about Ovan.
He's an old friend of mine. ♪
... Huh?
Even if I hadn't shown up, you would've done this anyway.
!

We must stop the R.A. Plan.
This isn't about just Ovan anymore.
What?
Kazumi has bitten off much more than he can chew.
Flash
What's this?!
We know what caused the Second Network Crisis.
Flash back seven years to 2010.

A.D.2010
Yokohama
Starting with the Yokohama Fire...
...the Second Network Crisis was the outward effect of something within The World
An incident occurred in relation to the birth of Aura--the Ultimate AI
?!
The World was the source of all this?

Aura's birth, and her bracelet.
Asuna
..the genius Harald built into his MMORPG a system to sample players' thoughts-- leading to the creation of Aura, the Ultimate AI
From the Foundation of The World
Harald Hoerwick
Emma Wielant

Harald planned an MMORPG based on the Epitaph of Twilight's world-view and sold it to CC Corp.
The phantom epic web-poem left to us by the beautiful poet Emma Wieland.
The newly born Aura was the fruit of Harald's unrequited love for Emma.
Aura inherited the wisdom of the genius Harald and the knowledge of the beautiful Emma.
The World A.D. 2011-2014
The Golden Age
was the administrator of the World-- a skillful de-signer and the instrumental creator.
The World was an autonomous MMORPG managed by an AI.
Guardian Ubiquitous
Besides being a great leap forward in AI engineering, she is also a marvel of philosophy and human intellect.
However!
Hoh!

...is unknown.
poof
The cause of Aura's disappearance...
Snap
Flash
Restore Aura Plan
Because of that, the senior management of CC Corp made their decision
A.D. 2015
We attempted to revive the missing Aura.
Since then, the servers have gone down frequently.
Disaster has spread throughout the net, and the processing load has increased greatly.
There has also been a surge in human-caused troubles.
By producing and managing the ultimate AI...
Gateway to Utopia
...we planned to take the initiative in creating the next-generation network society.

80% of the game data was lost, and half of The World was shut down
But due to the unforeseen fire, Project G.U. was aborted.
This made the upgrade to the current R:2 unavoidable.
Jun Bansyoya took responsibility, resigned and disappeared without a trace.
What a shame.
He was an excellent leader.
We had different mothers...
...but I admired my brother as an engineer.

Yata-sama...
However, Yata has failed us.
Now is the time to restart the true Project G.U.
After that, you were drafted into CC Corp.
You were provided with the remaining Epitaph PC..
and instructed to follow Yata, the newly appointed head of G.U., as a watchdog for the senior management
That...
For the stability and well-being of the network!

I, too, will carry on my brother's dying wish.
That was my brother's wish.
Flash
...I now have the Skeith Factor!
But... the Epitaphs that will become the key to Aura are already--
No worries! We have the Dummy Factor.
And...
!!
You went up against Haseo?!

Ovan is history's greatest destroyer...
...and as his accomplice, Haseo is no different from him.
You fool!
What about the safety of the player?
I merely secured the return of our company's property.
You have to set your priorities in order.
Kazumi-san!
Pi-kun.
Gulp
And so are you.

I can't let you be the only one with clean hands.
you want clear your brother's name...
Ugh ...
...follow my orders and prepare for some dirty work, body and soul.
I won't let you down.
I'm different from Yata, you see?

Shadows?
With Kazumi's Dummy Factor...
...what could possibly happen?
If a person bears the power of a god...
the only result can be ruin.
Because of the game's autonomy...
...when there is an unbelievable amount of power in flux...
the strain will give rise to a Shadow
The ruin of tales.
When that appears...
the true Third Network Crisis should occur.
A tale of ruin.
No...

.....
This still isn't over yet?
The true one?!
That horrid hand that beckons us...
Ah...

The Anti-Existence, Cubia!

This R.A. engine, From an administrative point of view, is the same as Ovan's Rebirth program.
R.A. Progra startu initiat
Rebirth is the power that can presage the world's end.
.....
All the Dummy Facto
the Epitaph Users are all AIs.
The PCs, too..
However, Ovan was too selfish.
Phase Ov complet No irreg larities
beep

Too driven by emotion.
Me, I'm fed up with sentimental endings.
!
I've got no need for this Dummy Factor!

...I am...
With this Skeith Factor ...
...the Key!
That's too dangerous! Kazumi-san!
Heart rate accelerating...
Aaaah!

I am not trying to search for God's laws through repeated observation and experimentation like Yata.
I am not trying to search for God through the light of reason like Oyan.
...I will become Aura.
In other words...
Before my genius, God will obey me!

The strongest items.
Unlimited GP.
An invincible body.
Lost Ground
0Hidden Forbidden
Battlefield
Coite-Bodher Battlefield
Wishes?
Every wish comes with a price.
If we find the Key of the Twilight, what will you wish for?
Huh?
Such as Dr Faust who, desiring omniscience, sold his soul to Mephistopheles.
The fruits of the devil's deeds carry a hefty price

For example, that island floating up there in the sky.
Chapter 17: Sample
A dragon sent in ancient times by the gods in heaven for the purpose of destroying men.
It's said that eight brave men sealed it away in stone, but during the battle they lost one comrade
Battle Dragon Mag Mell.
A dragon?

In other words...
Huh?
...the state of The World
That's something that belongs to the players
A world-view is
That's the worldview of this game, right?
A story--a scenario.
...you might say Shino and I were created in your story.
Where is a way?
A way, so to speak
Where there's a will.

Collectively.
So the heart of a true player lies in the willingness to pay any price.
That's right.
Because this is a sample of the story.
Maybe it would be okay if I wished for you.
IF it's you...
I wonder, what would you wish for?
.....
I means it's the unseen hand of God.
You mean because of fate?
I'll pass.

If it's you, Haseo...
My wish...
...was to eradicate the AIDA.
Because this coincided with Ovan's wish, I...
...my brother was able to spin the tale of my rescue.
Because you were there
The price was the Network Crisis.
And his own self.

This way, please!
Preparations complete ♪
Flash
Welcome to Net Slum. ♪
Net Slum?
Who would've thought that the depths of Moon Tree's @Home would be linked to a place like this?
It's an illegal server.
A hacker's paradise, huh?
I've heard the rumors, but it actually exists?
And a hacked PC...

Ah ha ha ha!
The hell?!
Isn't that outfit overdoing things a bit?
...Hey, Zelkova!
Moon Tree isn't just a cheat shop disguised as a cult, is it?
Uh...
So.
Leave all the hard stuff to Sakaki. ♪
Oh, this way.

place in
e World
that's
t in The
World...
Zelkova, what is all this?
I didn't know a thing about Moon Tree being connected to Net Slum!
Aina-chan?
but that'll come later.
Where's that punk Kazumi?
Here.
There are many places like that.
The black-box room where I slept.
Even AIDA...
But how are regular players like us supposed to get to the Serpent of Lore on the system side?
Safety Division 2 has confiscated the Serpent of Lore. It appears that's where they've placed their headquarters

We'll use a back door. ♪
Back door?
Looks like a pile of junk data.
What's this?
Looks like...a dead end.
ｽﾀｽﾀ

Boom
Tri-Edge's sign!
Once Oven broke into a place, he was in the habit of hiding a stepping-stone program there.
That's right. During the incident with the AIDA server, he even got to the Serpent of Loss.
A Trojan horse?

It's Oven's passageway.
Tri-Edge's sign is a back door!

I'll save Ovan!
...of good, evil and common sense.
I'll surpass the constraints ...
We'll carry out an attack on the Serpent of Lore
I'll provide support ♪
Our goal is the recovery of the Skull Factor
We'll stop Kazumi's R.A. Plan.
We should be able to solve this if we talk it over!
I'm relying on you as our last resort.
I'm going, too!
I haven't heard anything. She's not replying to e-mail

That sign is a window to the next world.
All right, we'll be back.
Be careful.
Cracking...
Administrator access granted.
!
Attempting to penetrate the Serpent of Lore.

flash
Your Xth Form is a custom item from Neo Slum that's equipped with Hacking Skills ♪
boom!

...is Ovan's loophole?
So, this...
Starting a story is the easy part. Getting to the end is what's hard.
The way
The way...
But the middle never comes easily, and fixing plot holes is a pain, so in the end I always get tired and leave it unfinished.
Coming up with a setting and beginning a new story is fun!
I've written stories and started novels online
It's just something I remember from a conversation I had with Ovan
Oh... that's a quote from my favorite author.

But Over
Finished
what he
started
...even if it was a tragedy.
Because at the time...
it was what was important.
it had
to be
Praying, lamenting--nothing short of fooling God himself could stop him.
Because if you can't see things through like that, what's the point in starting?
IF we're not there...
...there's nothing we can do!
Kazumi
the Skeith
Factor
He'll be
launching
the R.A
Plan.
According to Zelkova, the only possibilities are Aura's revival or Cuba's return
.....

This is dangerous! Abort the R.A. program!
Kazumi-san!
Would you like me to kill you?
This is a summoning ceremony.
Ceremonial grounds are a boundary..
between one's self and others, outside and inside, zero and one.
A place from whence something begins--
a borderline.

Now I, Kazumi, will control the limits of this story!
Dispose of them.
What's wrong?
.....
Kazumi-san..
.....
Nothing will get in my way.

So, that's the loophole to the Serpent of Lore.
elkova hould ave all prepa- tions in order.
Zelkova-sama...
can't elieve hat the dmaster Moon Tree hacker...
Stop!
?!

Are these guys from Safety Division 2?
You are the former user of the Third Phase, Magus, aren't you?
Doing part-time for Yata, huh?
Looks like you've even played a little game of hacking.
Cheating...
...will be punished!

Data Drain!
This is bad!
Haseo-san!
Haseo
eady lost
e Avatar.
he takes
it From a
ta Drain...

What?!
He's not even an Epitaph User...
He deploying the Data Drain!

...I could see it.
I could target their Data Drain, with my guns.
Ryou Misaki...
...you have lost all property rights to your PC.
User agreement violation confirmed
A modified PC

Haseo-san!
If there are any complaints, you can waste the court's time.
This is the power of the Xth Form.
Double Trigger...
Data Drain!

Freeze Shot!

Chapter 18: False God

Wow, this really is customized!
Xth Form...
crack
flash
Confinement successful ♪
Are they okay?
Eeek!
They're system-side, so they'll recover quickly.
Zelkova?
Well, let's get going. ♪

To the Serpent of Lore!
Ovan's back door!
Sign Hacking!

This is the Serpent of Lore
!
The R.A. Plan...
It's already begun?!
!
Pi?

Kuhn!
You--?!
I'm so glad that you're safe!
Is that.. Haseo?
That's the least of our concerns.
!
Well, well.
Have my subordinates slipped up?

Kazumi!
You bastard...
you almost killed me!
I'm appalled.
Your Player Character is just riddled with cheats, isn't it, Haseo? Or should I say Ryou Misaki-kun?
It's better than your murderous deeds!
Let's talk this over!
!
It's that Harvest Cleric...
Are you... the young lady from Moon Tree?
Yes.
For the sake of CC Corp and the players...no, For the sake of the whole of society...

Kazumi-san is taking responsibility.
Fil CC Corp has continued to silence the truth about the Lost Ones. They should take responsibility for their actions!
It's time to settle this.
...we will revive and manage the Ultimate AI, Aura.
Because of the unimaginable digital hazards that the autonomy of The World will bring about
If we fail to do that, we'll never be able to bring true stability to the network.

The victims will continue to pile up...
Seven years ago...
now.
And my brother two years ago...
The days of Genesis and heroic tales like Emma Wielant's epic poem are over.
...but don't you want the network to be safe?
If so...
Kazumi-san...
I may not know much about the Ultimate AI or complicated things like that...
You're saying that the lives of players are important. That it's important to talk things over.
Oh, I see.

This isn't a damned class meeting!
The debates of a bunch of brats eager for praise...
...shamelessly lined up with nothing but model responses!
You bastard!
So, concerning the AIDA incident, to what extent have you accomplished anything?
How about Moon Tree?

...yet to be completely unaware of it.
Such arrogance, to think what you're talking about is true...
...ght, ...ao?
You tried to save just one girl, even if it meant sacrificing half the world.
On that point, you still have hope.
So did Ovan.
You guys achieved that
R.A. Program... switching to final phase.
beep!
badum

My chest is throbbing!
Haseo?!
His right eye...
Is that my Skeith Factor?!
...Is it responding to the original Chosen One?
This throbbing

Regardless!
This way, people will be set free!
Final phase executed
No-- don't do it, Pi!
I will...
...carry out my brother's dying wish.

ringing
Oh no!
My ears are ringing!
Atoli-chan?!
My head hurts...it's crushing me!
Irregularities in the second factor!
The Dummy Factor has become unstable!

No way!
That Harvest Cleric--!
Kazumi-san! She's just a regular person..

Freeze Shot!
bang
flash
This isn't the Dummy Factor. This is the power of a true Morganna Factor.
Don't think I'm as easy to beat as a common thug

Take this!
Waltraute!
...No.

No.
No.
No.
No.
Ryou-san...
No!
Haseo-san!
Ato--

Aaaaaah!
Troll!
Chi-gusa...?

...Haseo-san...
I want to protect...
Flash
What the hell? What's this light?!

An awakening...
Atoli is an Epitaph User?!
An Avatar...?
I will protect Haseo.

Due to overlap with the Second Phase, the execution of the R.A. Program is becoming unstable!
!
DNNNG
Make my body Re-born!
Supreme Goddess!
Force the execution!
Let's roll back the stone from the door.
Anti-Existence?
.....
You'll give birth to the Anti-Existence!
That's what caused the Second Network Crisis!
Stop this!
If you give birth to a false god, The World will be distorted!

It was the largest reason the original Project G.U. was set back.
You know?!
I know more than you guys do.
You're talking about Cubia?
I didn't hear about that!
He chickened out and left his own project at the last moment.
Jun Bansyoya was too scared of Cubia
You bas-tard.
You just want to show off your power!
But if that's so...
...all I need is for Cubia to do my bidding.

Let me show you!
Its name is...
my name is...
?!
WOOSH
Aura!
What the...?

Ughh
...

TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED, LITTLE ENGINE!

Yea, beyond the path that we walk lies a story. Heading toward an ending that no one knows. That is hack. This is G.U.+. What an interesting story. So our journey is not over...yet.

CYBERCONNECT 2 HIROSHI MATSUYAMA

FOR THOSE WHO DIDN'T KNOW I WOULD BE CONTINUING THIS, HELLO! TO THOSE WHO WERE WAITING FOR THE VOLUME TO COME OUT, I'M SORRY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

IT'S NO EXAGGERATION WHEN I SAY THAT WE'RE IN THE SECOND HALF OF G.U.+, SO I THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME CONTINUE THIS.

--TATSUYA HAMAZAKI

P.S. PLEASE LOOK FORWARD TO THE .HACK//G.U. NOVEL (FOUR VOLUMES ARE PLANNED IN TOTAL). (GRIN.) LOOK FORWARD TO ILLUSTRATIONS BY YUZUKA MORITA IN THERE, TOO.

It's the fourth volume all of a sudden. Thank you very much!
From this volume on, Hasumi's costume has changed. S. has his weapons—guns!
After I looked at it, I thought, "That's so cool." And then I thought, "Wait...
did I really draw this?" From now on, I'll keep trying harder! (sweat)
Kazumi is a new character whose actions I keep getting obsessive
about. Zelkova is also like that. ♪ (No matter how many times
I write it, I can't remember the kanji (laugh).)
I'm always looking forward to looking at the scripts, and
every time, I say, "What will come up next?"
Continuing with things, it's an honor to be
associated with this manga until the end.

--Yuuka Morita